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Sixty-sixth year

Provisional

6575th meeting

Thursday, 7 July 2011, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Wittig	(Germany)
Members:	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Mr. Vukašinović
	Brazil	Mrs. Dunlop
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	Colombia	Mr. Osorio
	France	Mr. Briens
	Gabon	Mr. Moungara Moussotsi
	India	Mr. Kumar
	Lebanon	Mr. Assaf
	Nigeria	Mrs. Ogwu
	Portugal	Mr. Vaz Patto
	Russian Federation	Mr. Zhukov
	South Africa	Mr. Mashabane
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Parham
	United States of America	Mr. Grant

Agenda

The situation in the Central African Republic

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic and on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in that country (S/2011/311)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

doption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Central African Republic

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic and on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in that country (S/2011/311)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Central African Republic to participate in this meeting.

It is so decided.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Margaret Vogt, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic, to participate in this meeting.

It is so decided.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Jan Grauls, Chairman of the country-specific configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission on the Central African Republic and Permanent Representative of Belgium, to participate in this meeting.

It is so decided.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2011/311, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic and on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in that country.

I now give the floor to Ms. Vogt.

Ms. Vogt: It is an honour for me to address the Council in my new capacity as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in the Central African Republic and to present the fifth report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA) (S/2011/311). The report before the Council provides an account of the main developments during the first half of this year and the peacebuilding challenges that lie ahead for the people of the Central African Republic and its Government. It also describes the main activities of BINUCA in support of the Government's peace consolidation efforts in accordance with the mandate entrusted to it by the Security Council.

Much has been accomplished over the last two years, since the establishment of BINUCA as an integrated peacebuilding office in January 2010. A number of governance institutions have been established, and some key legislation has been instituted. Freedom of the press has been expanded, despite recent setbacks, when two journalists were arrested for articles they had published. The overall security situation remains calm but is unstable, especially outside of Bangui.

Despite these advances, the Central African Republic still faces serious challenges. It is afflicted with extreme poverty, weak national institutions, corruption, a high rate of violent crime perpetrated by armed movements and brigands, human rights violations and impunity.

As noted in the report, BINUCA and the United Nations system have spared no effort in providing timely and integrated support to the Government and the people of the Central African Republic in addressing those challenges.

In the current context, and as the Secretary-General's report highlights, the two most immediate challenges are the political dispensation following the legislative and presidential elections and the implementation of peace agreements with rebel groups, and the sustainable disarmament and reintegration of former combatants, as part of the overall security sector reform.

The reporting period was dominated by the presidential and legislative elections. International and national observers characterized the elections as inclusive and peaceful while noting a number of irregularities. The Constitutional Court has addressed some of these irregularities by overturning results in nine electoral districts and ordering a rerun in 13 others. On 29 June, the Minister for Territorial

Administration announced that the 13 by-elections would be held in approximately two months.

The composition of a new Government, headed by incumbent Prime Minister Touadera, is a positive step, in our view, towards the establishment of an inclusive cabinet. It comprises representatives of civil society and the opposition parties, including six women.

The Government has pledged to address immediate challenges. In this regard, it announced the establishment of a new, professional and independent body to manage future elections and the revision of the electoral code. This commitment was again publicly stated at the recent partners' roundtable in Brussels. I believe that we should hold them to this promise.

As a result of the boycott of the electoral process by the opposition, the Parliament and other institutions are dominated by the ruling party. This situation constitutes a considerable challenge to ongoing efforts towards stability and national reconciliation. As mentioned in the Secretary-General's report, a major challenge would be for the Government to provide political space and engage the opposition outside the Parliament on issues related to the development of the country. The Government has committed itself to undertaking political reforms, including of the electoral process, to address some of the difficulties that plagued the last elections. BINUCA will work closely with regional and international partners to support the Government in addressing these issues.

In May, we witnessed positive developments on the implementation of the peace agreements with armed movements and rebel groups. The Government announced its intention to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate all combatants by the end of the year. Concrete steps have been taken in this regard. On 12 June, in another positive step, the Convention des patriotes pour la justice et la paix (CPJP) joined the Libreville peace process and signed a ceasefire agreement with the Government. On 13 June, Baba Laddé, the Chadian rebel leader of the Front populaire pour le redressement (FPR), signed a communiqué with the Chadian Government to start negotiations with a view to signing a peace agreement within a month to lay down its arms and for the safe passage of his group back to Chad.

The implementation of such an agreement, if followed through, could lead to the repatriation to Chad of about 400-500 elements of the FPR, which is one of the issues raised by the Armée populaire pour la restauration de la démocratie (APRD) as a precondition to disarm. We have to remember that the FPR is really a Chadian group operating in the Central African Republic; it is not a national rebel group of that country. This agreement was facilitated by the National Mediator of the Central African Republic. Here, we see the Central African Republic playing a positive role in trying to get some of these rebel groups back to their countries.

There were subsequently clashes between elements of the FPR and the APRD politico-military movement, in the course of which APRD hostages were taken by the FPR. Eighteen hostages were subsequently released on 29 June in Kagabandoro following the intervention of the National Mediator. The successful implementation of this agreement will partially depend on the compliance of the disparate groups that belong to the FPR. We shall see whether they will follow what their leaders sign.

Bringing the FPR into a peace process is an important element in unblocking the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process in the north-west of the country. President Bozizé and the leaders of the politico-military groups announced the launch of a national DDR process on 25 June in Bocaranga, and over 340 APRD combatants were disarmed on that occasion. The Government indicated its intention to proceed with similar disarmament exercises in other locations in the hope of completing the process by the end of the year. The launch at Bocaranga was conducted without the support of the international community, and especially without international military observers, as the mandate of the observers had expired just days before the event. President Bozizé, expressing great frustration with the slow pace of support by the international community, has appealed for assistance for the entire DDR/security sector reform (SSR) processes, but argues that both the Government and the politico-military groups were ready to secure their country and to enable the people to resume their normal lives.

Support to DDR and overall security sector reform remains a core priority for the Central African Republic and BINUCA. I met with President Bozizé and Prime Minister Touadera in the margins of the partners' roundtable meeting held in Brussels. They both emphasized the political importance of SSR and

DDR, and restated their commitment to implementing the terms of the agreements signed with all politico-military groups. It is imperative that the international community do everything possible to support the DDR and SSR processes and to provide the necessary resources for their timely completion. BINUCA, the United Nations country team and partners, along with the Government, will undertake a review of the overall DDR and SSR processes in the near future.

The Central African Republic is at the crossroads of critical conflict zones, impacted by insecurity from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Sudan, with the possibility of an upsurge of insecurity across the Sudanese border as that country grapples with security challenges that will necessarily attend the creation of the new State of Southern Sudan. The Central African Republic also suffers from cross-border criminal elements roaming the Sahel and exploiting the weak ability of the national security forces to secure the Republic's territory and people. An implosion in the Central African Republic would have cataclysmic impact throughout the region, negating investments made in securing the neighbouring countries. I intend to work closely with my colleagues in the region to provide a holistic response to these challenges.

In the meantime, the Government has taken an important step to secure the north-eastern Vakaga province by signing an agreement for joint border patrols with Chadian and Sudanese security forces. It is important that this agreement be implemented and that the joint patrols receive adequate support from the international community. This joint force will partially address the security vacuum in areas occupied by rebels, heavily armed poachers and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).

In the south-east, the LRA continues to kill, take hostages and impede normal daily life. Security needs to be improved in the north-eastern part of the country to help address the deteriorating humanitarian situation. Humanitarian workers are coming under increasing attacks from armed criminals. We must not allow the criminality in certain parts of neighbouring Darfur to become a model for the Central African Republic.

Efforts to provide security for Central Africans and consolidate peace must be complemented by the promotion of good governance and the rule of law. The Government must extend its authority into each of the regions and provide health and education services to all of its citizens as it works to create economic opportunities.

Another subject of great concern to the Secretary-General is the protection of women and children. More needs to be done to prevent sexual exploitation and to promote children's and women's rights. We must also ensure that we put an end to the recruitment and use of child soldiers, and more broadly work to see that children's rights are respected and enforced. I intend to establish a protection unit within my office to help coordinate these issues, as befits the importance attached to them in our mandate.

I would like to highlight the need for the promotion of a culture in which human rights are respected throughout the country. Concrete steps must be taken to tackle corruption and the pervasive impunity affecting law enforcement institutions. The Government must be supported in strengthening the judicial system to end mob justice. On a positive note, the Government recently granted BINUCA access to prisons and detention centres. Also, an independent national human rights commission is expected to be established shortly.

The Government of the Central African Republic presented its second Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) for the period leading up to December 2015 at the partners' round table that was held in Brussels. That conference was held largely due to the efforts of Ambassador Grauls, and I wish to put on record that his personal engagement in seeing that meeting through was instrumental to the success of that effort. The document outlines the Government's strategy and programme towards peace consolidation, including good governance, rule of law, social services and economic development. I encourage traditional and new partners to financially support the programmes contained in the second PRSP.

Looking ahead, the main challenge would be to ensure continued support to peace consolidation efforts in the Central African Republic, in particular to efforts towards political dialogue, DDR and SSR. I would like to thank the members of the Council and of the Peacebuilding Commission, the United Nations family and especially my predecessor, Special Representative of the Secretary-General Zewde and all other partners

who have been so steadfast in their support of the Central African Republic.

The President: I thank Ms. Vogt for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Grauls.

Mr. Grauls (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Sir, for permitting me to address the Security Council in my capacity as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission country-specific configuration for the Central African Republic. First, I would like to pay tribute to Ms. Sahle-Work Zewde, the former Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic, for her efforts to support the peacebuilding process in the country. I would like also to take this opportunity to wish Ms. Vogt every success as the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA) in Bangui. I already feel that it will be a privilege to work with her.

At the outset, I wish to inform the Council in detail of the main activities of the Peacebuilding Commission over the past six months, and then of the priority actions to be undertaken by the country-specific configuration in the coming months.

Let me turn first to the activities of the past six months. Without losing sight of other sectors, our configuration focused mainly on the electoral process and preparations for the partners' round table that was held in Brussels three weeks ago. With respect to the elections, the Peacebuilding Commission played an important role from the outset in mobilizing donors. As a result of those efforts, it has been possible to overcome the $7.5 million shortfall in the electoral budget.

Moreover, the Commission provided advice through BINUCA to some of the actors involved in preparing the elections, including the Independent Electoral Commission, the Government and the opposition. The recommendations also covered measures to be taken with respect to irregularities noted in large part during the first round of parliamentary elections. In the light of that, the boycott of the second round of the parliamentary elections by a coalition of opposition parties was a particularly regrettable incident.

I wish to draw the Council's attention to the policy statement presented by the Government of the Central African Republic to the National Assembly in Bangui on 18 May. This communication should be studied by the Council because it contains extremely important political engagements that should be recalled here. The Government has committed itself, notably, to complete the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of rebels before the end of 2011; to combat corruption; to bolster governance and the rule of law; and to revise the 2009 electoral code and to establish a permanent and independent secretariat responsible for future elections. The Commission trusts that the Central African authorities will not tarry in implementing these political commitments.

After the conclusion of the election process, the Government of the Central African Republic and the Peacebuilding Commission organized in Brussels on 16 and 17 June a round table of partners, with the support of the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank and the African Development Bank. The Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Mr. Jean Ping, decided to travel expressly to Brussels to attend the round table. Approximately 160 participants represented some 30 Governments and 35 international, regional and subregional organizations; observers represented Central African civil society, international non-governmental organizations and the private sector. For a forgotten country such as the Central African Republic, this was truly an unprecedented number of participants.

The main purpose of the round table was to make partners aware of the priorities of the second-generation Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). This excellent document was drawn up by the Central African authorities with the technical assistance of the World Bank.

Development needs obviously remain vast in the Central African Republic. The message of the participants at the round table was very clear. They all encouraged the national authorities to define priority areas for action in the second PRSP and to focus on measures to restore stability in the country and to target vulnerable populations in particular. It was clear to all that this event was but a first step on a long road intended to strengthen links with existing partners and to develop new ones from a broad spectrum of potential new partners. Naturally, the Commission, cooperating with the Central African authorities, will

ensure a targeted follow-up to the work of the round table.

I also welcome a number of decisive developments in the weeks and days prior to the round table to which the Special Representative of the Secretary-General has already referred. These include the signing of a ceasefire agreement with the Convention des patriotes pour la justice et la paix, the only remaining rebel group that did not sign the 2008 Libreville peace accords; the signing of a tripartite agreement among the Central African Republic, Chad and the Sudan that should contribute to stabilizing the situation in the north-east of the country; and further progress towards national reconciliation.

I would now like to turn towards the future. One of the main priorities for the road ahead will be security sector reform, as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General has also noted. Here I welcome the fact that the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General has made support for the Government in creating a strategy for national security sector reform (SSR) a priority for BINUCA. The list of existing SSR projects, as presented at the round table in Brussels, still needs to be prioritized and guided by a strategy, such as was sketched out during the national seminar on security sector reform in April 2008. In the coming months, the Commission will focus on getting effective SSR under way.

The areas of good governance, the rule of law and judicial reform will also be part of our peacebuilding priorities for the coming year. The United Nations Development Programme has already begun implementing a multi-year programme that must be completed and refined. Transparent management of natural resources is an issue that requires urgent attention in order to generate increased State revenue and encourage private investment. For its part, the Commission will pursue its efforts to mobilize the support of existing and potential partners for peacebuilding projects.

Before concluding, I would also like to emphasize an issue that is important both to me personally and to the German presidency of the Council — the situation of women and children in areas of conflict in the Central African Republic. That situation is still very serious in some areas. During my last visit to Bangui in April, I had the opportunity to stress the urgency of setting up a reporting and monitoring mechanism for children and armed conflict. On my return to New York, I briefed the Security Council's Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, which you chair, Mr. President. I encouraged the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and on Sexual Violence in Conflict to again visit the Central African Republic this year in order to assess the situation on the ground, which, I reiterate, remains very worrying and deserves the full attention not only of the Commission but also of the Council.

The President: I thank Mr. Grauls for his briefing.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Central African Republic.

Mr. Doubane (Central African Republic) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of the Government of the Central African Republic, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council this month. We are encouraged by your country's commitment to supporting States weakened by violence of every kind in their quest for peace, stability and development. I also commend you for your commitment to the issue of women and children in conflict.

On behalf of the Central African Republic, I again congratulate the Secretary-General on his successful re-election as head of our shared Organization, enabling him to continue, consolidate and complete the many projects begun during his first term. We also take note of his report of 16 May (S/2011/311), which has just been introduced, on the political, security and social and economic situation in the Central African Republic, as well as the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office there. That virtually exhaustive report comes at the right moment, considering what is currently at stake both nationally and internationally.

Here I would like to thank and express our deep respect for Ms. Margaret Vogt, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, for the clarity, depth and above all the concision of her briefing. I cannot fail to include in our thanks her predecessor, Ms. Sahle-Work Zewde, who in difficult and unusual circumstances skilfully led her mission before, during and after the elections last January.

We have witnessed a series of encouraging events since those elections, as has already been mentioned and which is worth repeating. These range from the Constitutional Court's partial cancellation of a quarter of the National Assembly seats, to the round table for Central African Republic donors held in Brussels three weeks ago. They also include the formation of the Government and its general policy statement, affirmed by the Parliament; the tripartite Sudan-Chad-Central African Republic summit; the signing of a ceasefire agreement with the Convention des patriotes pour la justice et la paix, the last rebel group remaining outside the Libreville peace accords; the imminent return to its own country of a foreign politico-military movement; and the start of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process.

We in the Central African Republic are certain that these events, with the agreement, efforts and cooperation of all stakeholders, offer hope of a return to peace. They are visible signs of that return to peace and essential factors in a lasting recovery. The President of the Republic and his Government will do their utmost to maintain dialogue with the political players and civil society, as was recommended in the inclusive political dialogue. They are determined to pursue the DDR process, which from now on should be coupled with the security sector reform programme with the aim of restructuring the defence and security forces effectively. In my fragile nation, peace is priceless, and any consolidation of democratic gains requires it.

If these measures are to be achieved, they must of course continue in coordination with our bilateral and multilateral partners, particularly the United Nations through the Peacebuilding Commission in its Central African Republic country-specific configuration, chaired in masterly fashion by Ambassador Grauls, whom we hold in great esteem and whom I would like to commend here.

While they are committed, to the extent possible, to carrying out the report's recommendations, the highest Central African authorities recall nevertheless that, in an accurate assessment of the situation in the Central African Republic — which lies at the very heart of the African continent — requires internal and external factors alike to be taken into account, as, thankfully, has been done here. The situation with regard to the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a cruel, barbarous rebel group from a non-bordering country, is a perfect example. The LRA's atrocities, destruction, pillaging, forced conscription and deportation of men, women and children have made it deserving of eradication once and for all through the comprehensive mobilization of efforts and shared resources.

That is why, while recognizing the full value of the United Nations and African Union initiatives on this issue, the Central African Republic vests great hope in the creation, within the next 48 hours, of a new bordering State that will drastically overturn certain principles and alter the geography of the area, albeit with foreseeable consequences. We remain convinced that that State will join us in our tireless struggle against a cross-border enemy with nebulous ambitions that disturb the tranquillity essential to the development of the subregion.

In conclusion, as it has done in the past, my country will continue to cooperate with all States without exception. At times, discerning friends and observers, justifiably weary of the issue of the Central African Republic, question its will and its ability to recover or merely to move forward.

The Central African Republic is definitely not a hopeless case; its failure is even less a foregone conclusion. With its limited means and working tirelessly, it is fighting to remain on its feet. It is fighting to build the rule of law. My State is fighting daily to remain a good father to its population, which aspires only to live and prosper in peace.

The Central African Republic expresses its undying gratitude to the international community of which it is fortunate to be a part, whose unwavering and many forms of support have never failed it, and on which it hopes to be able to rely throughout this painstaking process.

The President: There are no further speakers on my list. I now invite Council members to informal consultations in order to continue our discussion on this subject.

The meeting rose at 10.50 a.m.